

**Department of Health and Mental Hygiene  
Office of Health Care Quality  
MA.01.03**

**Response to Recommended Actions**

**Recommendation: Adopt the following narrative:**

**Work Plan Addressing Staffing Levels and Current Priorities:** The Office of Health Care Quality should annually submit to the committees a work plan including an analysis of existing staffing levels and current priorities. The work plan should also include a labor/hour data analysis for all survey activity.

**Response:**

The OHCQ has found that preparing the work plan is a useful management tool, as it has helped the OHCQ evaluate staffing patterns and workload requirements. However, the annual reporting requirement, while appropriate considering the OHCQ's resource issues this coming fiscal year, may be of lesser importance in the future.

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**Responses to Issues**

**Issues: The Office of Health Care Quality Partially Meets Four of Seven Federally Required Performance Standards:** The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services annually reviews the Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ) to determine compliance with seven performance standards. OHCQ met three and partially met for of the seven performance standards.

**Work Plan Needed to Identify Staffing Shortages:** OHCQ has not been able to meet all established State and Federal survey requirements due to a combination of increased workload and reduced staff levels. A work plan including an analysis of existing staffing levels and current priorities should be submitted annually to the budget committees.

**Response:**

The majority of the additional 14 positions will be dedicated to federal programs and will have a direct impact on the OHCQ's ability to meet its federal requirements. The additional positions allocated to the nursing home unit, after allowing for a year of training, will augment existing survey teams conducting annual surveys. The CMS has heightened the importance of surveying community-based providers including hospice, home health care and ambulatory care facilities. Five of the positions will be dedicated to Assisted Living surveys, which are not federally regulated but which are an office priority.

The review also observed that federally required life safety code surveys are either late or out of sync. Accounting for the large portion of extended timeframes between surveys, is the fact that there is lack of coordination between the state survey and the life safety code surveys. As a result, the OHCQ has requested dedicated funding for this function and is modifying its agreement with State Fire Marshal Office. These additional resources should improve the OHCQ's performance on future annual reviews.

The OHCQ has found that preparing the work plan is a useful management tool. It will continue to evaluate staffing patterns and workload requirements.